



WILLIAMSBURG CODE COMPLIANCE DIVISION NEWSLETTER Winter 2005



401 Lafayette Street, Williamsburg, Virginia 23185 (757)220-6136 Fax (757)259-3798

Inspection Policy Change

Well, we held out as long as we could... Effective April 1, 2005, our inspection request policy will change to no longer accept morning or afternoon requests. Very simply, our inspection load is increasing and the projects on the near horizon appear to be many. We must make this change to be able to continue to offer same day inspections. Please note that all inspections still must be called in by 7:30 AM for same day service.

There will be a couple of exceptions to this policy. If the inspection is in an occupied establishment where the occupants are not available, we will set up specific times for these inspections. Our policy does not allow an inspector to go in to an occupied building unescorted.

In addition, we will attempt to be at your job site within two hours of any inspection that requires concrete (footings, slabs, etc...). We realize that getting concrete these days is like getting a hybrid car. When your name comes up on the list, you have to take it or go to the back of the line. When setting up a concrete inspection, please give us a time (no later than 2 PM) during the day that you know the job will be ready for inspection.

New Inspection Request Procedures To Be Unveiled In March

In conjunction with our revised Inspection Request Policy, we will roll out our new internet based email request system. Customers will now be able to schedule inspections three ways:

1. We will gladly take any inspection in person while you are in doing business with city offices.
2. Inspection requests can be made by calling (757) 220-6136. This line is open 24 hours a day. Calls made to this line are retrieved at 7:30 AM each morning.
3. Starting March 15, 2005, you will be able to web email your inspection request by entering the Codes Compliance portion of the city web page by typing www.williamsburgva.gov/dept/codecomp/index.htm. Just hit the Inspection Request button and you will be prompted to enter the information required to schedule inspections.

Please keep in mind that inspections are scheduled for the working day received (if received by 7:30 AM) unless you have made a specific request for a future date. In addition, any inspection request received after 7:30 AM on the phone line, in person, or by web email request will be scheduled for the next working day.

It is important that work be ready by 8:15 AM the day that the inspection is requested. Inspectors will establish their routes based on workload and location of inspections. We will not be able to honor request for times except as noted in the policy above. So if you are tempted to call in and ask for "last inspection today," you may want to consider making the request for the next working day.

We are working to have inspection results online by the fall of 2005. Stay tuned as we work towards this goal!

Certificates of Occupancy

USBC Section 119.4 states, "...the building official shall issue the certificate of occupancy within five working days after receiving a request for the same." Remember that the Codes Compliance Division and Zoning Division policy is that C of O's will be ready 24 hours after the last inspections. Thanks!

Trivia 101

Who has replaced Jack Proctor as Deputy Director for the Department of Housing and Community Development Division of Building and Fire Regulations?

See answer on back!

New Staff

Robert (Bob) Hale has joined our staff as the New Construction Supervisor. Bob holds Virginia Tradesmen's Certifications in all trades and is well certified in the inspection and plan review field. He has many years of construction and inspection experience.

Bob will be handling the predominance of our plan review services and inspection scheduling. Bob will also serve as the first contact in code conflict resolution for new construction issues. He can be reached at 220-6138. Welcome aboard Bob!

Why Do I Need My Plans On Site?

We get asked all the time, “Why do you reject my job because I don’t have the plans on site?” The USBC in Section 111.5.4 states, “...One set of such approved construction documents shall be retained by the building official and one set shall be kept at the building site, open to inspection by the building official (or his designee) at all reasonable times.”

It is impossible for inspectors to remember the details of each plan from inspection to inspection. The approved plans contain reviewed and checked structural elements, building orientations, and the necessary details to carry out the inspection. In addition, the plans contain the dimensions, the approved number of rooms, and any architectural elements required by the Planning Department.

The Codes Compliance Division has the following policy regarding having approved plans on the job. Although it is up to the inspector’s discretion, we will conduct any inspection without approved plans looking for obvious code violations (nailing, fire stopping, etc...). However, the inspection is to be rejected if it is conducted without approved plans unless the work is of a minor nature. Need to get a copy of your approved drawings? Call us at 220-6136 and we can work you up a set at a minimal fee.



Watts Happening !

A common question comes up with each residential service change. “Am I required to add arc fault protection to my bedrooms?” USBC Section 122.4 states, “Portions of the structure not altered...are not required to comply with the code requirements for a new structure. Work shall be done in such a way so as not to lower existing levels of health and safety.” The USBC wants to encourage the upgrading of outdated equipment without penalizing the building owner by requiring additional equipment not in place when the building was built. Although we encourage you to consider the new safety technology that is on the market, it is not required.

Post That Permit!

USBC Section 112.3 states, “A copy of the building permit shall be posted on the construction site for public inspection until the work is completed. Such posting shall include the street or lot number if one has been assigned, to be readable from the public way.”

By posting the permit, you are letting the public know that you have obtained the necessary approvals to perform work. The posted permit card allows the inspectors to find the appropriate job when conducting inspections. In addition, it allows emergency crews to find the address when responding to calls.

One of the most important items found on a residential permit card is the required posting of a Mechanics’ Lien Agent. The Mechanics’ Lien Agent information is printed on the posting card, satisfying this requirement.

Trivia Answer

Emory Rogers replaced Jack Proctor as Deputy Director in January of this year. Rodgers retired as the Inspection Services Division Chief for Arlington County. He has served in leadership positions for several national code organizations including being a Past President of the Virginia Building and Code Officials Association and Past President of Building Officials and Code Administrators (BOCA).

Emory has been with the Department of Housing and Community Development working on special projects for the past few years. Specifically, he guided the DHCD’s efforts toward adopting the 2000 Uniform Statewide Building Code and has headed the effort for the 2003 USBC adoption scheduled for sometime between October and December of this year.

Congratulations Emory and best of luck!